

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 LISBON 05825 031110Z

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USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

CINCLANT NORFOLK VA

COMUSFORAZ LAJES FLD AZ

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

USNMR SHAPE BRUSSELS BEL

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 5825

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, PO

SUBJ: MADEIRAN INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT

REF: LISBON 5460 DTG 161719Z SEP 75

SUMMARY: IMPORTANCE OF MADEIRAN INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT HAS BEEN EX-  
AGGERATED ON MAINLAND. POLITICAL OBSERVERS ON MADEIRA BELIEVE  
FLAMA TO BE SMALL, WITHOUT POPULAR SUPPORT, AND OF MARGINAL  
SIGNIFICANCE IN LOCAL POLITICS. EXISTENCE OF MOVEMENT, HOWEVER,  
HAS HAD SOME IMPACT ON POLITICAL EVENTS ON MAINLAND. SUPPORT  
OF INDEPENDENCE IS LIKELY TO GROW ONLY IN EVENT OF: (A) COM-  
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PAGE 02 LISBON 05825 031110Z

MUNIST TAKEOVER ON MAINLAND; (B) MAINLAND DENIAL OF MADEIRAN

AUTONOMY; OR (C) FAILURE OF AUTONOMOUS MADEIRA TO RESOLVE ITS ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES. END SUMMARY

1. EMBOFF RECENTLY VISITED MADEIRA FOR FIRST-HAND EXAMINATION OF POLITICAL SITUATION. REPORT ON CURRENT STATE OF SEPARATIST ACTIVITY FOLLOWS.

2. INFORMED POLITICAL OBSERVERS IN MADEIRA FEEL THAT LISBON PRESS HAS EXAGGERATED THE IMPORTANCE OF SEPARATISM IN THE ARCHIPELAGO. THOUGH THEY READILY ADMIT TO KNOWING LITTLE OF A CONCRETE NATURE ABOUT THE MOST WIDELY PUBLICIZED MADEIRAN SEPARATIST ORGANIZATION, THE FRENTE DA LIBERTACAO DO ARQUIPELAGO DE MADEIRA (FLAMA), THERE IS GENERAL AGREEMENT ON THE FOLLOWING:

3. FOUNDING: FLAMA WAS FORMED IN JUNE OF 1975 IN RESPONSE TO (A) DETERIORATION OF ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN MADEIRA SINCE APRIL 1974 STEMMING PRIMARILY FROM A DRYING UP OF IMMIGRANT REMITTANCES AND FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN THE TOURIST INDUSTRY AND DECREASING COMPETITIVENESS OF MADEIRAN EMBROIDERY AND FRUIT EXPORTS IN WORLD MARKETS DUE TO MANDATORY WAGE INCREASES AND (B) LOCAL CONCERN OVER THE LEFTWARD DRIFT OF POLITICAL EVENTS ON THE MAINLAND.

4. MEMBERSHIP: FLAMA MEMBERSHIP HAS PROBABLY NEVER NUMBERED MORE THAN A FEW DOZEN PERSONS, MAINLY CONSERVATIVE PROFESSIONALS OR BUSINESSMEN AND THEIR FAMILIES. FLAMA HAS VIRTUALLY NO SUPPORT AMONG THE RURAL AND URBAN WORKING CLASSES WHICH MAKE UP OVER 80 PERCENT OF THE ARCHIPELAGO'S POPULATION.

-- THE FRONT IS ROUGHLY MODELED ON THE AZOREAN LIBERATION FRONT (FLA), AS DEMONSTRATED BY ITS SIMILAR NAME AND MODUS OPERANDI, INCLUDING CLANDESTINE CIRCULATION OF COMMUNIQUEES AND SMALL SCALE TERRORISM. THERE MAY BE INFORMAL TIES BETWEEN THE TWO ORGANIZATIONS.

5. FINANCIAL SUPPORT: FLAMA'S PRIMARY SOURCES OF FINANCIAL AND MORAL SUPPORT ARE MADEIRAN IMMIGRANT COLONIES IN THE UNITED STATES, BRAZIL, AND VENEZUELA.

6. POLITICAL IMPACT: FLAMA HAS HAD NO SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON POLITICAL ACTIVITY IN MADEIRA. THE BOMBIN CAMPAIGN WHICH HAS

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PAGE 03 LISBON 05825 031110Z

CONSTITUTED ITS MOST VISIBLE ACTIVITY TO DATE REPRESENTS A DESPERATE ATTEMPT TO ATTRACT PUBLIC ATTENTION. FLAMA'S PRIMARY IMPACT, ACCORDING TO SAME OBSERVERS, HAS BEEN IN MAINLAND FORUMS. THEY CITE TWO EXAMPLES. FIRST, BY LENDING CREDENCE TO MODERATE MADEIRA MILITARY GOVERNOR BG CARLOS AZEREDO'S WARNINGS THAT GONCALVES' CONTINUATION IN OFFICE WOULD LEAD TO INDEPENDENCE OF MADEIRA, FLAMA ACTIVITIES REINFORCED ARMED FORCES ANTI-COMMUNISTS SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN TO OUST PRIME MINISTER. SECOND, THE THREAT OF

SEPARATISM HAS GIVEN MADEIRA'S FIVE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY DELEGATES A BOOST IN THEIR EFFORTS TO OBTAIN A BROAD CONSTITUTIONAL GUARANTEE OF MADEIRAN AUTONOMY.

7. INDEPENDENCE: DESPITE PRESENT MADEIRAN LACK OF INTEREST IN INDEPENDENCE, THREE SCENARIOS WHICH COULD LEAD TO GROWTH OF SEPARATIST SENTIMENT IN MADEIRA CAN BE FORESEEN. THEY ARE:

(A) COMMUNIST TAKEOVER ON MAINLAND: ALL POLITICAL LEADERS CONTACTED BY EMBOFF SAID THEY WOULD SUPPORT IMMEDIATE INDEPENDENCE FROM PORTUGAL IN EVENT OF A CLEAR-CUT COMMUNIST VICTORY ON MAINLAND.

(B) DENIAL OF AUTONOMY: ALTHOUGH INDEPENDENCE HAS LITTLE ATTRACTION FOR MADEIRANS, THEY FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT ARCHIPELAGO NEEDS AUTONOMY TO RESOLVE ITS ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES. SHOULD, FOR ANY REASON,

THEIR EFFORTS TO OBTAIN AUTONOMY FAIL, SEPARATISM CAN BE EXPECTED TO GROW.

(C) FAILURE OF AUTONOMOUS MADEIRA: ADMINISTRATION OF AN AUTONOMOUS MADEIRA WOULD BE CONTROLLED BY LOCAL POPULAR DEMOCRATS (PPD) AND SOCIALISTS (PS) WHICH POLLED, RESPECTIVELY, 70 PERCENT AND 19 PERCENT OF

VOTE IN APRIL ELECTIONS. EVEN IF MADEIRA OBTAINS AUTONOMY, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT IMMIGRANTS AND FOREIGN INVESTORS WOULD CONTINUE TO HOLD BACK THEIR CAPITAL AND THAT ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN ISLANDS WOULD CONTINUE TO DETERIORATE. PRIMARY BENEFICIARY OF SUCH A DEVELOPMENT WOULD BE MADEIRA'S FAR LEFT GROUPS, ALREADY FIRMLY ENTRENCHED IN ORGANIZED LABOR. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, MAJOR PARTY LEADERS MIGHT BE ATTRACTED TO A SEPARATIST SOLUTION FOR THEIR ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES.

8. COMMENT: OUSTER OF GONCALVES AND FORMATION OF VI PRO-VISIONAL GOVERNMENT HAVE EFFECTIVELY REMOVED MUCH OF THE POLITICAL INCENTIVE FOR MADEIRAN INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT. MOST MADEIRANS  
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PAGE 04 LISBON 05825 031110Z

ARE NOW CONVINCED THAT AUTONOMY FROM PORTUGAL WILL ALLOW THEM TO DEAL WITH THEIR ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES. AS ALL THE MAJOR PARTIES HAVE GONE ON RECORD FAVORING AUTONOMY FOR AZORES AND MADEIRA, IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY WILL PROVIDE FOR AN ARRANGEMENT THAT WILL SATISFY THE MADEIRANS.  
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